

## Habitat Conservation Plans

### What are HCPs?

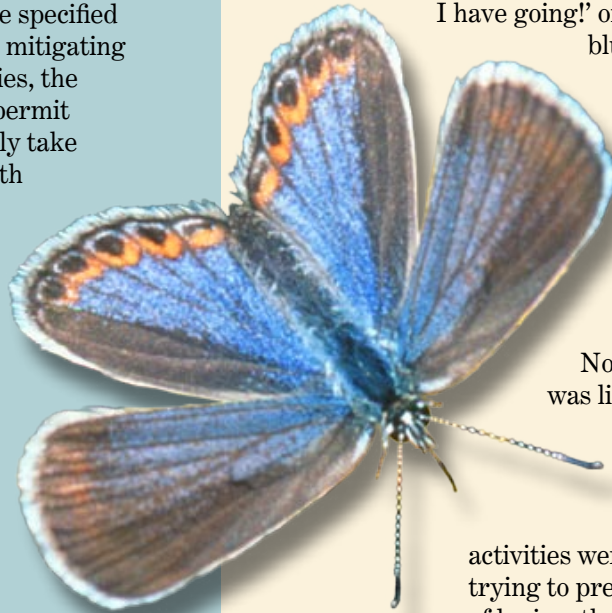
Plans that allow for economic development in conjunction with endangered species conservation. If an HCP meets the specified criteria, including minimizing and mitigating the anticipated take of listed species, the Service issues an incidental take permit that allows the landowner to legally take listed species while proceeding with development or other activities.

### What is the landowner's role?

The landowner develops an HCP with the Service that includes an assessment of the likely impacts to the species from the proposed project, the steps he or she will take to minimize and mitigate those impacts, and the funding available to implement the steps. The plan also identifies alternative actions to the taking and the reasons why those alternatives are not being used. The landowner then applies for an incidental take permit.

An HCP may exist in your area that you can join. Such plans are known as programmatic HCPs and are often county- or region-wide plans such as the San Diego Multiple-Species Conservation Program. Plans may include plants and nonlisted species as well as listed species.

Courtesy of Thomas Meyer, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



"Instead of hearing, 'I don't have that butterfly on my property,' I hear, 'How can I get some of that wild lupine seed?' 'You should see the lupine patch I have going!' or 'I saw my first Karner blue on my land!'" That's

Dave Lentz, Karner Blue Habitat Conservation Plan coordinator with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, talking about small, private landowners.

Not long after the butterfly was listed as endangered, forestry companies contacted the DNR to make sure that their timber-harvesting

activities were lawful. They had been trying to prevent the disturbance of lupine, the host plant for the larval stage of the Karner blue. The

discussion expanded to utility companies, similarly committed to ensuring that mowing rights-of-way was in keeping with conserving the butterfly. The result was a landscape-scale Habitat Conservation Plan. Under

**"We're exploring a new approach—not a heavy-handed one, but one where landowners embrace a stewardship ethic and apply their knowledge. We're trying to encourage good people to do the right thing. So far, it's been a validation of the voluntary strategy."**

—Dave Lentz

the Statewide HCP, the Wisconsin DNR has a permit authorizing the "incidental take" of the species in connection with otherwise lawful activities. Along with avoiding harm to the butterfly and performing surveys for it, partners conduct prescribed burns to benefit wild lupine—deliberately making sure that sunlight reaches it—or they plant lupine and nectar plants. Also, partners develop community outreach tools such as Alliant Energy Company's brochure and International Paper Company's "Spotlight on the Environment" video.

The HCP has 38 partners, including the DNR, Wisconsin county forest departments, gas and electric companies, timber companies, town and county highway departments, The Nature Conservancy, and the Wisconsin Departments of Transportation and Agriculture. The HCP applies to more than 250,000 acres where the majority of the butterflies are found.

Nearly 350 private landowners are voluntarily participating in a variety of activities that also benefit the butterfly and its habitat including farmers, family forest owners with fewer than 1,000 acres, and individual homeowners.



Courtesy of Thomas Meyer, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources